[16th Century]

/32 cont./

175 [491] [824] according to what they say. It[1] is crossed on a remarkable contrivance, peculiar to the Indies, a straw bridge placed on the water itself, which is of such light material that it does not sink, and it is a very safe and easy crossing...there grow large quantities of a type of reed that the Indians call totora, which they use for a thousand things, because it is food for pigs and for horses, and for the people themselves; and with it they make house and fire, and boat and whatever is needed; [101] so much do the Uros find in their totora. These Uros are so brutish that they themselves do not regard themselves as men. It is said of them that when asked what people they were they replied that they were not men but Uros, as though this were [361] another class of animals. Entire pueblos of Uros were found living on the lake, on their totora rafts, joined together and fastened to some large rock, and they may fetch themselves off from there and move a whole pueblo to another location; and thus when sought today where they were yesterday, no trace of them is to be found, or of their pueblo..../Translated from the Spanish./

(Historia natural y moral de las Indias /Natural and Moral History of the Indies/, 1590. Book II, Chap. VI.)

Noticia sobre los Indios Uros en un Memorial de la Epoca del Virrey Toledo /Note on the Uro Indians in a Memorial of the Epoch of the Toledo Viceroy/.

175 648 [511] The Inca, being below Lima, sent one of his captains, called Casiracapa, to those heights with many men, to survey the land and recount to him what he saw there, /33/ and while traveling through the land he came across some people whose dwellings were like those of animals, and who lived in them like brutish animals, around a large Lake, naked, and eating nothing but roots of plants that grew in the Lake, and some Fish if they caught it, and when the Captain saw these people, [728] [579] he recounted the fact to the Inca and was sent by him to remove them from the Lake and resettle them among the

[1] [i.e., Lake Titicaca outlet--Analyst]

[16th Century]

/33 cont./

175 Neighboring Pueblos, and he removed and resettled them:
648 The damage they caused in the places where they were /re-
728 settled/ was such, since they stole all they could, that the
599 inhabitants, unable to bear with it, asked Casiracapa to rid them of those people, because they robbed them, ate their livestock, and were not useful in any way whatsoever; the Captain advised the Inca of this and he was ordered to return them to the Lake from which he had removed them, and to threaten them with the death penalty if they were to leave it;
[101] these people of whom I speak are called Uros, the lake where
[131] they were found is that of Paria where they are now plying their old trade, which is to steal and to eat; some have set up small
[269] villages, and they go out to steal, and it is astonishing what is said of these Indians, that they steal from the herders who live there a haul of pigs and eat it in one night, which if so many people did not attest to it would not be believable; I have ascertained that three Indians stole 12 sheep from the area and ate them in two days without leaving anything usable: they are infidels in addition. Your Excellency would perform a great service to Our Lord by removing them from there so
[356] that they and their descendants might become Christians, and giving them lodgings of some sort because their foul dwellings defy description. /Translated from the Spanish./

(Document contributed by Dr. Raul Porras Barrenechea.)

175 Visita de los Indios de la Provincia de Chuquito que estan en cabeza de S. M. Lima, 1568. /Visit of the Indians of the Province of Chuquito Who Are on the Register of H. M. Lima, 1568/.

[114] This document from the General Archives of the Indies in Seville (A.G.I.), Justicia section, File No. 479, was analyzed by Marie Helmer in these Travaux, III, pp. 115-150, 1951.

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sympathetic Bertonio lists the Uru in his vocabulary as "Vn nacion de indios despreciados entre todos . . . y de menos entendimiento," Paredes calls them "brotado . . . despreciables, de poco entendimiento, ásperos y zahereños." The Belgian traveller Walle says of them, "The face is lifeless and without expression; it betrays hardly a sign of intelligence." Posnansky writes:

> El Uru no tiene placeres, desconoce ahora el juego. La riza jamás asoma a los labios de su cara inmóvil, sin la menor mímica, tostado por el sol y petrificado por el viento glacial. Hasta sus niños son pusilánimes, apáticos y tristes; acurracados y mudos. . . . Todo el aspecto de los Urus es el de un pueblo amordazado.

Métraux preferred their congeners, the Chipaya, to them as being less morbidly distrustful, suspicious, fearful, brutal, and stupidly avaricious than their neighbors:

> The Uru have a character and a genius as sombre as the Aymara. The stranger who comes to visit them receives a cold, even a slightly hostile welcome on their part. To this illwill is added the unhealthy rapacity of the Aymara and the Bolivians, and finally the apathy and heaviness of spirit which renders the *altiplano* Indian so downright hateful. . . . The last thirty Uru of the Desaguadero rival each other in hostility and distrust before even well-intentioned strangers, and it is scarcely pleasant to sojourn among them.

The present writer, however, after months of field-work with the Aymára, found the Uru vastly more sympathetic than the former truculent, hate-filled group; in my original field notes I have accounted the Uru a "cordial and smiling people . . . rather more vivacious and handsome than the Aymára"![14]

History. Of the history of the Uru almost nothing is known. Their only tradition is that they have lived in their present home immemorially but have been progressively despoiled of their lands by the Aymára. Alcedo, writing in the latter half of the 18th century states that those on the islands in Lake Titicaca had, against their will, been removed to the mainland, where they dwelt in gloomy caves and in holes in the ground covered with reeds. Throughout their history the Uru appear to have been a steadily and rapidly disappearing minority group, subject in turn to the Aymára, Inca, and Spanish.

Language. I did not live with the Uru long enough to learn the language in any sense, or even to control the phonemic system. The utter independ-

[14] J. de Acosta, *Historia de las Indias* (1591), p. 62. Garcilaso de la Vega, *Comentarios Reales de los Incas*, Vol. 7, p. 4. Bertonio, *op. cit.* Vol. 2, p. 380. Paul Walle, *Bolivia* (New York, 1914, tr. Bernard Miall). Posnansky, *op. cit.*, p. 90. Métraux (JSAP 27), p. 89; (28), p. 207.